

Gyaltsab-je quotes a sutra which teaches that the antidote to the laziness of adhering to negative actions is the realization of emptiness of true/ultimate existence.

Those who earnestly practice the meaning of Bodhicitta, particularly those of weak faculty (such as Bodhisattvas of weak faculty), yet do not meditate on the meaning of emptiness will fall under the sway of the laziness of adhering to negative actions. The reason for falling under the sway of such laziness is that they continue to be attached to ordinary, pleasurable activities.

The experience of such pleasurable activities, in turn, is the result of virtuous actions of body, speech, and mind accumulated in the past.

Hence it is important for practitioners to not merely cultivate the practice of compassion but also the practice of wisdom, for otherwise their positive actions accumulated in the past may go to waste by becoming the cause of negative actions.

Lama Tsongkhapa says in his *Golden Rosary*:

First are the instructions that advice on the diligence of non-adherence which dispels the holding on to indolence. What is the subject matter [of these instructions]? [The subject matter is] the diligence of non-adherence.

The way [in which the instructions are given]: [The instructions are given] by way of teaching that the objects of adherence of body, speech, and mind are [ultimately] natureless.

The necessity [of the instructions]: [The necessity of the instructions is] to eliminate the complete adherence by practitioners of weak faculty to happiness, i.e. to pleasure of body, speech, and mind.

Therefore, [the Buddha] says: "Furthermore, when great Bodhisattvas do not uphold [the true existence of] the body, do not uphold [the true existence] of speech, and do not uphold [the true existence] of the mind, great Bodhisattvas completely purify the negative tendencies of body, speech, and mind."

2. *Instructions on the causes of increasing one's practice*

Next follows the **diligence of non-weariness**, which counteracts the laziness of feeling disheartened and assists practitioners in increasing their practice.

Haribhadra says in his *Commentary Clarifying the Meaning*:

Those of fearful nature become thoroughly upset, when despite having familiarized for a long time they do not accomplish their desired goal. Hence in order not [to become] thoroughly weary, the instructions teach that the grasping at form up to [the grasping at] perfect, complete enlightenment does not exist.

Gyaltsab je says in his *Ornament of the Essence*:

[The following sutric passage:] "Great Bodhisattva, at the time of practicing the six perfections, do not grasp at forms; do not grasp at feelings..." is an instruction [by the Buddha] in order not [to become] thoroughly weary at the time of practice, because it is an instruction that teaches: "Realize that grasping at the true existence of form up to [grasping at the true existence of] perfect, complete enlightenment does not [truly] exist." It is appropriate to instruct in such a way because some [practitioners] of weak faculty who have a fearful nature become thoroughly upset when despite having familiarized themselves with [Buddhist] practice for a long time they do not accomplish their goal accordingly. This must be overcome.

Practitioners of weak faculty are those who have little mental strength and who are prone to the laziness of feeling disheartened. After they have meditated for a long time and do not experience any discernable results, they may get upset and feel disheartened about engaging in Buddhist practice. Therefore, as an antidote to the laziness of feeling disheartened Gyaltsab-je quotes a sutra that as with the above instruction, advises practitioners against grasping at the true/ultimate existence of forms, feelings, and so forth, but instead to make an effort to realize the ultimate nature of all phenomena.

Similarly, Lama Tsongkhapa says in his **Golden Rosary**:

Second are the instructions that advice on the diligence of non-weariness which dispels the laziness of feeling disheartened. What is the subject matter [of these instructions]?

[The subject matter is] the diligence of non-weariness.

The way [in which the instructions are given]: [The instructions are given] by way of teaching that one should not grasp at [the true existence of] any phenomenon ranging from form up to perfect, complete enlightenment.

The necessity [of the instructions]: Having meditated on the path for a long time, i.e. for many eons, but having not attained their desired enlightenment, those of weak faculty who have the nature or disposition of being fearful and scared become greatly disenchanted as a result of grasping at the fact that they have engaged in practice for a long time. [Thus, the necessity of the instructions is] to eliminate [such disenchantment]. [The Buddha] says: "Not grasping at form..." – "... not grasping at the unsurpassable complete enlightenment, Shariputra, great Bodhisattvas develop the six perfections and cannot be crushed by anything."

When explaining that Bodhisattvas must realize the emptiness of phenomena ranging from form up to the enlightenment of a Buddha, we may get overwhelmed and disheartened.

However this can be counteracted by developing an understanding of the process of realizing emptiness, and thus by comprehending that once practitioners *directly* realize the ultimate nature, i.e. the emptiness of true existence of one phenomenon they will naturally realize the ultimate nature of *all* phenomena.

Furthermore, we should not obsess about all the different practices that we may still have to do but focus on just one practice and cultivate that single-pointedly to the best of our ability.

In general, it is vital that we direct our attention to our own mind, since all our problems, our dissatisfaction, and our shortcomings originate in the mind.

We do not have to amass more knowledge in order to gradually become omniscient because our lack of knowledge is not the cause for our inability to simultaneously know all phenomena. The cause for this inability is our obstructions, our misperceptions of reality, other afflictions induced by this misperception, and their imprints. Therefore, we have to make an effort to gain an understanding of the lack of true existence of phenomena, since the direct realization of that enables us to remove our obstructions and to purify our mental consciousness, so that we can be of the greatest benefit to ourselves and others.

### 3. *Instructions on the causes of not falling into the Hinayana [vehicle]*

The third type of diligence is the **diligence of thoroughly upholding the [Mahayana] path**. It counteracts the laziness of self-contempt/defeatism and assists practitioners in averting the deterioration of their Mahayana practice.

Haribhadra says in his **Commentary Clarifying the Meaning**:

[Practitioners may] become discouraged when they have to receive transmissions of the path by the Buddhas, etc., for the sake of [understanding] each meaning.

Hence in order to thoroughly uphold the path, the instructions teach that phenomena are not produced inherently.

Gyalsab-je says in his **Ornament of the Essence**:

[The following sutric passage] "Shariputra, a great Bodhisattva possessing such exalted wisdom [sees], in the world of the eastern direction, [Tathagatas] as many as the grains of sand on the banks of the Ganges..." is an instruction [by the Buddha] in order to thoroughly uphold the Mahayana path, because it is an instruction that teaches that phenomena are not produced inherently.

It is appropriate to instruct in such a way because [practitioners] who have to receive transmissions of the path by the Buddhas, etc. of the ten directions for the sake of [understanding] each meaning, [may] become discouraged, thinking "How am I able to do that?" This must be overcome.

